

Baltimore's Business

—BY JOHN T. WARD—

Command Changes At Equitable Trust Bank In Joint Holding Firm Venture



Robert G. Merrick

Three important changes in the executive staff of Equitable Trust Company were made by the board of directors following the annual stockholder meeting.

It also was announced that the bank, in conjunction with Suburban Trust Company, has obtained a charter with wide powers for a firm called Columbia Holding Company.

The venture, already made known, is the first banking institution planned for Columbia, the new city (110,000 by 1980 according to promoters' plans) in Howard county.

The new bank to be known as Columbia Bank and Trust Company, capitalized at \$1,000,000, controlled 50-50 by the two parent institutions through the holding firm, will be opened in the fall of 1967.

The State Banking Department has approved its charter,



John A. Luetkemeyer



Owen Daley, 2d

and application also has been made for membership in the Federal Reserve System.

Robert G. Merrick, president for many years (he was first elected in 1932), and then chair-

man since 1961, now becomes chairman of the board and continues as chief executive officer. Mr. Luetkemeyer is Treasurer of the State of Maryland.

He also is a member of the Commissioners of Finance for Baltimore City, and on the State Banking Board. He has been with the bank since 1933, and an officer since 1946.

Owen Daley 2d, executive vice president for two years, was elected president. Prior to 1965 he was a senior vice president of Mercantile-Safe Deposit and Trust Company.

Herman L. Cruehn, former vice president of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, was re-elected as vice chairman of the executive committee.

Stockholders today approved a directors' recommendation to increase authorized capital from 1,053,625 shares to 1,106,500 share of \$10 per value.

The extra shares will be distributed to holders as a stock dividend of about 5 per cent. The bank for many years has paid stock in addition to cash dividends, and in 1966 distributed a special one of 200 per cent. The new added shares will be sent out April 28 to holders of record March 30.

Mr. Daley, who presided, also announced five branch openings are due within the year, the first next week, as the bank expands its operations in the State.

He noted that the era of tight money and high interest rates may be over for a while, that a general reduction in interest rates already is under way, and that the effects may soon spread into credit areas.

A total of 857,632 of the bank's 1,053,625 shares voted approval of management actions and recommendations.

In 1966, the bank earned \$3.25 per share in contrast to \$2.63 the preceding year.